



Short Safety Subject

Carbon Monoxide Leading Cause Of Accidental Poisoning



Carbon Monoxide (CO) is the leading cause of accidental poisoning in the United States as stated in the Journal of the American Medical Association. The National Safety Council estimates that 1,000 people die every year due to carbon monoxide poisoning. CO binds to hemoglobin with an affinity 200-250 times greater than that of oxygen. CO replaces oxygen eventually causing suffocation.

Carbon monoxide results from incomplete burning of carbon fuels. Sources of CO are portable space heaters, gasoline engines, and gas appliances. **Never sleep with a portable gas/kerosene heater on inside any enclosure.** According to the Center of Disease Control fuel burning equipment such as camping stove, camping heater, lanterns, charcoal grills, and gas operated tools should never be used inside a tent, camper, houseboats, or other enclosed shelter. Opening tent flaps, doors, or windows is insufficient to prevent build up of CO concentration from these devices.

AR 420-90, Fire and Emergency Services, Chapter 6-3b, states "Portable gas or liquid fuel space heaters are prohibited in family quarters or where personnel sleep (including tents)."